LIBRARY

URBAN DISTRICT
OF
SOWERBY BRIDGE

LIBRARY

MEDICAL OFFICER'S
ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
Health and Sanitary State
of the District
FOR THE YEAR 1943

Kershaw & Ashworth Ltd., Hebden Bridge

URBAN DISTRICT
OF
SOWERBY BRIDGE

MEDICAL OFFICER'S
ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
Health and Sanitary State
of the District
FOR THE YEAR 1943

KERSHAW & ASHWORTH LTD., HEBDEN BRIDGE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b30121310

Urban District of Sowerby Bridge

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND OF THE HEALTH COMMITTEE

December 31st, 1943

Councillor A. SUTCLIFFE, J.P.
(Chairman of the Council)

,, A. BUTTERWORTH
(Vice-Chairman of the Council)

,, J. W. WILEY
(Chairman of the Health Committee)

,, C. Arrand

,, L. J. Breen

,, E. Butterworth, C.C.

,, W. Crossfield

,, S. Dawson

,, J. Grayshan

,, H. Haigh

,, T. Haigh

,, C. G. Hopkinson

,, R. H. Howarth

,, A. F. Longbottom

,, E. Lumb, J.P.

,, C W. Maude, J.P.

,, A. Murgatroyd

,, S. Nicholl

,, J. Noble

,, G. Sharp

,, G. W. Tucker, J.P.

,, P. Thompson

,, G. Vine

,, E. Wigglesworth,

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Chairman: Mr. Councillor J. W. WILEY

Medical Officer of Health: Dr. A. O. JOLLIE,
L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. (Edin.), L.R.F.P.&S. (Glas.)

Acting Medical Officer of Health:
Dr. V. C. MEYER, M.B.Ch.B. (Glas.)

Senior Sanitary Inspector:
WM. E. FOSTER, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector:
M. E. D. WILSON, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

URBAN DISTRICT STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Area of the District in Acres	6,966
Rateable Value	£89,820
Product of a Penny Rate	£312
Birth Rate, 1943	16.2
,, ,, 1942	15.6
,, ,, 1941	13.3
Death Rate, 1943	14.2
,, ,, 1942	14.0
,, ,, 1941	14.7
Infantile Mortality	43
Maternal Mortality	3.3

REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year ending December 31st, 1943

To the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee of the Urban District of Sowerby Bridge

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting to you my Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health, on the Health and Statistics of your District, together with the work done in the Health Department during the year ending 31st December, 1943. This war-time Report has again been curtailed in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

The following extracts of Births and Deaths are taken from the Returns as furnished by the Registrar General after correction for the Inward and Outward Transfers :—

		M.	F.	Total
Live Births	Legitimate	149	133	282
	Illegitimate	8	8	16
		157	141	298

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 16.2

		M.	F.	Total
Still Births	Legitimate	4	4	8
	Illegitimate	—	—	—
		4	4	8

Rate per 1,000 (of live and still births) 26.8

	M.	F.	Total
Deaths	126 ...	135 ...	261

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 14.2

Number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age .. 13

Infantile Mortality (all infants per 1,000 live births) 43

Deaths from Puerperal Causes ... ... Nil.

Deaths from Cancer 48

Deaths from Tuberculosis 9

Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age) ... Nil.

STATISTICAL COMPARISON WITH OTHER SMALL TOWNS

1943	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Infant Mort. Rate
Towns in England & Wales...	19.4 ...	12.7 ...	46
Sowerby Bridge	16.2 ...	14.2 ...	43

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Age Period (Years)	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Enteric Fever	Puerperal Fever	Pneumonia	Erysipelas	Measles	Whooping Cough	Cerebral-Spinal Fever	Smallpox
Under 1 year	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—
1 — 5	50	7	—	—	—	—	23	23	—	—
5 — 15	101	9	—	—	3	—	8	2	—	—
15 — 25	7	6	—	1	4	—	1	—	—	—
25 — 35	5	3	—	—	2	—	2	—	—	—
35 — 45	4	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
45 — 55	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
55 — 65	1	—	—	—	12	—	—	—	—	—
Over 65	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—
Total Cases Notified	169	25	—	1	26	3	35	27	—	—
Cases Admitted to Hospital	157	25	—	1	6	3	—	—	—	—
Total Deaths	—	3	—	—	9	—	1	3	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS

Total Cases on Register	PULMONARY Males	Females	Total		NON-PULMONARY Males	Females	Total
82	29	20	49	...	17	16	33

The usual enquiries have been made covering the notifiable diseases, all contacts being excluded from School and complete disinfection of the bedding, etc., being carried out in order to control as far as possible the spread of such diseases.

During the year it was found necessary to close the Midgley School owing to an outbreak of Scarlet Fever. Apart from this there has not been any prevalence of infectious disease during the year, the notifications comparing very favourably with those for districts similar in size to Sowerby Bridge.

The number of cases of Scarlet Fever has definitely increased on previous years, due to large outbreaks in Midgley and Sowerby Bridge. The disease, generally speaking, was a mild type, and only for one short period was it necessary to take any special action regarding the disease. This, as previously mentioned, was in Midgley, when it was found necessary to close the school for a short period.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The campaign which commenced nearly two years ago has continued throughout the year with a tremendous amount of success, the figures at the end show that 87 per cent. of the school children and 48 per cent. of those under 5 years of age have received full treatment.

According to the notifications, 25 children have been removed to the Isolation Hospital suffering from Diphtheria, three of whom died. This is rather disappointing, especially after such excellent work has been done by the Health Department in keeping this important matter constantly before the eyes of the public, by displays, film shows and general publicity. We do, however, look forward to a low diphtheria rate during 1944.

Thorough investigations were made into each case which was notified, and it was observed that in no case had any child been fully immunised.

Scabies Order, 1941

Arrangements still continue for the out-patient treatment of Scabies at the General Hospital, Halifax. Certificates for such treatment are issued at the Health Department. Treatment days are as follows:—

Females and Children: Monday and Thursday, 2-0 p.m. to 4-0 p.m.

Males: Tuesday and Friday, 2-0 p.m. to 4-0 p.m.

This arrangement is continuing to work very satisfactorily.

Where in-patient treatment is required, the Ministry of Health have allowed the Skin Hostel at Milner Royd, previously used for evacuees only, now to be used for County District patients. This arrangement works very satisfactorily ,and I am pleased to say that Scabies is in no way prevalent in this district.

During the year 29 children have been treated as in-patients at Milner Royd, the average period of stay for each child being 28 days.

At the Halifax General Hospital 105 persons have received out-patient treatment, and it has been observed that one treatment has generally been effective.

General Provision of Health Services

Two Isolation Hospitals are available for the treatment of the notifiable infectious diseases, these being Northowram Hall, which serves Luddenden Foot and Midgley, and the Fielden Isolation Hospital, Todmorden, which covers the remaining portion of the Urban Area.

Guaranteed Hospital accommodation exists at these two Hospitals for the treatment of infectious patients.

Other diseases, as Pneumonia, etc., are treated at the Halifax General Hospital. Accommodation is also reserved for cases of Smallpox at the Halifax Smallpox Hospital.

Child Welfare Centres are available at Sowerby Bridge and Luddenden Foot. These Centres serve the whole of the Sowerby Bridge Area, including Luddenden Foot and Midgley. Portions of the Luddenden District of Halifax and parts of Mytholmroyd are also served. The Centres continue their activities with success.

Tuberculosis Dispensaries are held twice weekly at the West Riding County Council's Dispensary in Sowerby Bridge.

Venereal Diseases are treated at Halifax Royal Infirmary.

Ambulance Service

Infectious Disease: The entire district is covered by the Motor Ambulance maintained by the Fielden Isolation Hospital and the Halifax Corporation, which is used in connection with the removal of Infectious patients.

Non-Infectious and Accident Cases: The District Council run a 25 h.p. Vauxhall Ambulance, which at the present time is staffed by the personnel from the A.R.P. Ambulance Depot. The Ambulance continues to operate very efficiently, together with the part-time and full-time personnel who take a keen interest in this work.

All accident cases are removed free of charge, whilst other removals are undertaken at a flat rate of 5/- per journey; if, however, specialised treatment is required at centres outside Halifax, then the charge is 1/- per mile.

Details of the journeys during the year are set out below:—

Number of Journeys	In-District Removals	In-District Accidents	In-District Total		Out-District Removals	Out-District Accidents	Out-District Total
465	332	82	414	...	39	12	51

The total number of miles travelled covering the 465 journeys enumerated above is 3,930.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

The public supply for the district continues to give satisfaction, as samples obtained from various parts of the district from time to time have proved.

Four samples of water for Plumbo-Solvency have been obtained from the Norland Supply, the results being quite satisfactory.

During the year the private water supplies in the more rural parts of the area have been sampled, and of the 20 samples taken for bacteriological examination five proved to be unsatisfactory. The necessary action has been taken in each case.

The private water supply to the property at High Lees, Sowerby, has been investigated with a view to complete reconstruction. A full specification for this work has been issued and it is anticipated that this will be completed early next year.

During the year it has been found necessary to close the water supply at Spark House Lane, Norland. Investigations showed that the water which was supplied by shallow wells was contaminated by the defective drainage system from the property in the vicinity. Work has now been completed upon the reconstruction of this drainage system and the pollution obviated. It was found necessary to have the well re-lined and properly covered. Recent samples have shown that the water is quite free from pollution and is again fit for domestic purposes.

Drainage and Sewerage

There has been no extensions to the drainage and sewerage systems during the year.

Repairs were carried out on the drainage system and part of the sewer in Hulme Street. The drainage system for the most part was re-layed together with a short length of sewer.

Apart from this the usual small works and minor alterations have been carried out, these being subjected to the hydraulic test.

There has been no substantial change in the sanitary accommodation of the district. The more rural part still being served mainly by the earth closet or pail. Conversions have been delayed due to the present emergency and lack of an adequate water supply and sewerage system.

The outfall works at Milner Royd, which work on the Activated Sludge principle, continue to give satisfaction. There has not been any complaint from the Rivers Board during the year.

Public Cleansing

The Cleansing Department continues its activities under great strain, due to the shortage of man-power, and the increased duties, including salvage and shelter cleansing, which have been undertaken. It has not been possible to get back to the weekly collection in the entire district, although in the more congested parts weekly ashbin collection is still in operation. The pails in the more rural area are collected weekly, but again it has been impossible with the many calls upon the Department to have the ashpits in the District cleansed fortnightly. The following table shows details of the number of receptacles cleansed by each vehicle during the year:—

	Ashbins	Ashpits	Pails	Loads	Tons	Cwts.	Qrs.
S. & D. 5	84,463	1		459	2,145	15	—
S. & D. 1	48,456	60		1,067	1,331	18	—
Commer No. 3	38,296	614	3,182	914	1,201	4	—
Commer No. 4	4,736	26	34,374	1,032	1,259	11	—
Totals	176,041	701	37,556	3,472	5,938	8	—

Salvage Department

The salvage of all materials continues at the Destructor Head, and also on the controlled tips where all the refuse is sorted, and a considerable amount of material is reclaimed and returned to industry to assist in the war effort. The Salvage Department continues to grow, and it has been found necessary to continue the operating of certain vehicles solely for the collection of salvage, mostly waste paper from the factories and shops of the District. The issuing to each housewife of the sack suitably marked for the storage of waste paper continues to work very satisfactorily.

Upon direction from the Ministry of Food the Waste Food Scheme has been extended after giving this a brief trial in the East Ward. The scheme is working quite satisfactorily and is proving to be quite a good source for waste food collection. At the present time approximately 150 galvanised bins are placed at various parts of the district, covering approximately 2,500 dwellings. The Works Canteens and similar establishments in the area are also covered by this extended scheme. All the waste food in the district is taken to Halifax Corporation for processing.

During the year a Book Drive was organised, the target being 40,000 books to be allocated to the various blitzed libraries and salvage. The Drive brought in approximately 56,000 books, which were allocated as follows:—

16 per cent. to the Forces.
4 per cent. to the Libraries.
80 per cent. to Salvage.

The following table gives details of the sales during the year:—

Materials Reclaimed

	T.	C.	Q.		£	s.	d.
Waste Paper	196	16	2	...	1260	5	5
Heavy Iron	56	6	1	...	108	19	11
Light Iron	7	15	0	...	6	15	6
Textiles	3	9	0	...	28	0	2
Cullett	31	12	1	...	32	1	1
Rubber	1	4	2	...	3	13	6
Waste Food	21	11	0	...	34	6	6
Loose Tins	61	9	2	...	58	16	9
Subsidy on Loose Tins ...				...	42	18	10
Bones	1	12	1	...	8	12	4
Non-Ferrous Metals	0	6	1	...	6	5	0
Bottles, 88¾ doz.				...	4	11	6
	382	2	2	...	£1595	6	6

General Inspection of the District

Nuisances: Routine inspection of the District has taken place from time to time, in order to detect nuisances and to investigate complaints registered at the Department. During the year 273 complaints were reported dealing mainly with matters under the Public Health Act, 1936. For the abatement of these nuisances 167 informal notices were served, 151 being complied with, other nuisances were abated on verbal instructions. It was not found necessary to serve any Statutory Notices during the year. It was found necessary to inspect the work in course of construction on many occasions, the complaints referred to above requiring 468 visits. At the end of the year 20 complaints remained outstanding.

HOUSING

Again the activities of the Department relative to housing have been restricted. All complaints registered at the Department have been inspected and the work satisfactorily completed. These were as follows:—

Under the Public Health Act, 1936, 37 complaints were registered, and upon inspection it was observed that 33 were justified, these were abated. To complete this work 143 visits and inspections were made. No Statutory Notice was served during the year.

Under Sections 84 to 87 of the Public Health Act, 1936, dealing with verminous premises, 7 houses were disinfested, using Cimex Gas, and 5 dwellings were dealt with by spraying. The nuisance in all cases was abated.

The housing conditions in the District are becoming more acute. The Informal Notices which are served from time to time are dealing with the immediate requirements to keep the premises reasonably habitable. During the war years it has been impossible to carry out any major repairs, and consequently much of the housing has fallen into a poor condition. Many houses which should have been dealt with during the war years under Section 26 of the Housing Act have remained standing, and as mentioned, many major repairs have not been undertaken. Consequently I do feel that drastic action will be necessary in post war years to bring working class houses of the district up to a reasonable standard. The Department, however, has not lost sight of this fact, and during the year a survey of the entire district was commenced, which will be completed early next year. The survey will provide valuable information and give the Council sufficient data to carry out a one-year programme. The survey is aiming to ascertain the urgent housing requirements of the district, and with this end in view the houses have been placed under three main headings and again subdivided as required. Details of the survey are set out below:

1. **Overcrowded Families:**

   (a) Permanent Overcrowding.
   (b) Temporary Overcrowding.
   (c) Possible Overcrowding.

2. **Separation of Families:**

   (a) Homes for Servicemen.
   (b) Separation of Present Families.

3 **Unhealthy Dwellings:**

(a) Illness Attributable to Unhealthy Dwellings.
(b) Alternative Accommodation required for Aged People.

From the headings set out above it will be seen that when the figures are obtained, much valuable data will be available for dealing with housing in the district.

The housing position at the end of the year was as follows:—

During the year 92 inspections were made in connection with overcrowding, and every effort was made on the part of the Council to abate this as far as possible, but with the acute housing position it has been impossible to effect any improvement. At the end of the year 63 cases of overcrowding were on the register, showing an increase of 6 on the previous year. This has been due mainly to either (a) Increase in the family, or (b) Children attaining the age of 10, and thus being counted as adults.

Smoke Abatement

It was not possible through the year to make any observations of the factory chimneys, but it was pleasing to note there was no apparent increase in the atmospheric pollution, due to factory chimneys in the district generally.

With the lifting of the ban by the Ministry of Home Security relative to the production of smoke, it is hoped that the observations which were taken in pre-war years will again be continued and the progress again restored in the abolition of the smoke nuisances.

Factories

Twelve factories have been inspected necessitating 37 visits. A number of Acts or Omissions in contravention of the Factories Act, 1937, were observed. These, dealing mainly with the Sanitary Accommodation were remedied, and at one large factory it was necessary to have the entire sanitary accommodation reconstructed.

The bakehouses in the area appear to be in reasonable condition, and on inspection of these no contravention of the Act was found.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk Production

Regular visits and inspections have been made to the milk producing farms in the area, and the standard of cleanliness of the sheds, etc., is generally good. Many of the farms are very up to date in their methods of production, with modern equipment in the milk and sterilising rooms, although a number still require improving, whilst some require entire reconstruction in order to bring them up to a reasonable standard. The greatest requirement is the need of suitable dairy premises.

Every effort is being made to bring the milk producing farms up to a reasonable standard, a great improvement having been effected during the year, specifications and suggested plans having been prepared for this work by the Department.

The samples obtained during the year number 60, of which 75 per cent. were satisfactory. The samples were mostly subjected to both the Methylene Blue Test and B.Coli Test.

The number of Producers on the Register at the end of the year was 92, the milk retailers number 107, none of which were removed from the Register during the year. There are four Accredited Producers in the area, whilst two licences have been granted for the bottling of Designated Milks.

Every effort is being made by the Department to induce the Milk Producers of the District to improve the premises in order that they will comply with the standard required for the production of Designated Milk.

Food Inspection

Regular inspection has been made at all the food shops within the District, special attention being given to the 36 registered food preparing establishments. The standard of cleanliness of the premises and equipment and utensils was quite satisfactory.

The quantity of food surrendered as unfit for human consumption after inspection, was as follows:—

	Tons.	cwts.	qrs.	lbs.
Vegetables			1	23
Meat		2	2	18
Fish		1	0	16
Fruit		5	2	9
Jam		14	1	14
Dried Milk	1	5	1	22
Other Foods			3	1
Eggs, 31 doz.				
	2	10	1	19

CENTRALISATION OF SLAUGHTER

The slaughter of all animals continues at the Halifax Public Abattoir, since the Ministry of Food closed the Sowerby Bridge Abattoir in October, 1942.

Regular inspections of all the butchers' shops in the district continues.

Civil Defence

The activities of the department are still centred around the Civil Defence Organisation. The department is still responsible for the following Services:— Ambulance, Casualty Information, Decontamination, Food Decontamination, and Emergency Mortuary. The personnel of the various services are kept fully trained; the Ambulance and Decontamination Services meet weekly for Talks, Lectures and Demonstrations, whilst the personnel of the other Services meet quarterly for Exercises and Demonstrations.

The members of the above Services are very keen and enthusiastic, this is borne out by the attendance and interest taken at the meetings. This, I may say, is mainly shown by the voluntary personnel of the Ambulance Service, who man the Civil Ambulance day and night, and in addition to the practice night complete up to 24 hours standby duty weekly.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I should like to record my appreciation of the keen interest shown by the Chairman, Mr. Councillor J. W. Wiley, in all the work appertaining to the Health Department, and also to the Health Committee for their unfailing courtesy and valuable assistance rendered at all times.

My appreciation is also due to your Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. W. E. Foster, and to the technical and clerical staff of the Public Health Department, for their work during the year, and their assistance in preparing this Report.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

VICTOR CAMPBELL MEYER,

Acting Medical Officer of Health.